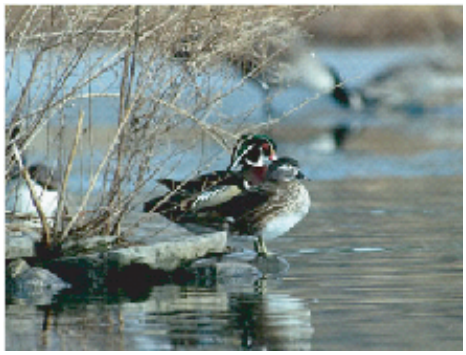
Indiana
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
COUNCIL
140 N. Senate Ave, Room 306
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Coordination of Indiana GIS through dissemination of data and data products, education and outreach, adoption of standards, building partnerships and the IndianaMap.

THE CONSERVATION TOOL

Challenge

Attracting new business and growing Indiana's economy rely on improving our quality of life, natural habitat and recreation opportunities. To capitalize on our natural heritage, conservation planners need to know: Where are areas with high wildlife and wild plant conservation potential in Indiana? How can we build support and plans to protect them?

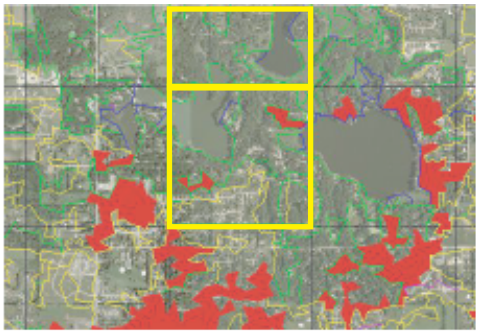


Wood ducks at the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge

Action

The answer to these questions was provided by the Indiana Biodiversity Initiative (IBI) - a collaboration of government, academic, and private planners and conservation scientists. IBI developed the Indiana Conservation Tool, a GIS package that combines maps of high-conservation-potential areas, free software, and a variety of other layers - aerial photography, topography, county boundaries, ecoregions, and roads. A guide is linked to information about conservation resources in each area of the map

IBI offers workshops to introduce users to methods of identifying areas with high conservation potential. Starting with existing protected areas like parks and forests, IBI added areas with the highest concentration of plant communities and rare species. Then they used models on selected wildlife to identify areas with enough habitat for species with larger spatial needs. Finally, corridors - narrow strips of land that connect larger areas - were identified to allow animals to move among conservation areas.



"High-conservation-potential" areas shown in yellow, with developed areas in red

Workshops also include instruction in using the map tools and the accompanying data. CDs are provided with all materials at no cost.

Results

- A single common source of information is available to everyone
- The Conservation Tool provides a basis for prioritizing protection programs
- Planners can maximize efforts by concentrating on high-conservation-potential areas
- Improved quality of life attracts business, grows the economy and staunches "brain drain"